



# SEAT PLEASANT NEWS

DECEMBER 2011 EDITION Visit us on the web at: [www.seatpleasantmd.gov](http://www.seatpleasantmd.gov)

## ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Property Assessment Appeal Process</i>	2
<i>Councilwoman Simms Receives Award</i>	2
<i>Police Department K9 Program</i>	4
<i>Fire Department Partners with Boy Scouts</i>	6

## City of Seat Pleasant

### Mayor

Eugene W. Grant

### Council President

Kelly Porter

(At-Large Councilmember)

### Ward I Councilmember

Elenora Simms

### Ward II Councilmember

Aretha Stephenson

### Ward III Councilmember

Reverla Yeargin

### Ward IV Councilmember

Gerald Raynor

### Ward V Councilmember

Darrell Hardy

### At-Large Council member

LaTasha Gatling

### City Administrator

Vincent E. Jones

### Treasurer

Robert L. Ashton

### Chief of Police

Samuel Prue

### Director of Public Works

Johnny Thompson

### City Clerk

Dashaun Lanham



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Seat Pleasant: A City of Excellence continues to shine as a wonderful bedroom community that has great potential and shines among the best municipalities in the nation.

There is a story of a conversation in the Bible between Nathanael and Phillip that comes to my mind. Nathanael asks the question, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Phillip responds, "Come and see." Some people ask the same question about Seat

Pleasant. Can there any good thing come out of Seat Pleasant? As mayor and a proud resident, I say, come and see.

On November 7, 2011, people came to A City of Excellence from around the country. People from California, Missouri, Maine, Mississippi, Colorado, Oregon, Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts and a number of other states visited A City of Excellence were able to witness first-hand the GOOD that comes from our beloved community that we call home.



The National Community-Based Organization Network (NCBON) co-hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> annual reception in Seat Pleasant. Each year during the American Public Health Association national meeting NCBON hosts a reception that honors *Unsung Heroes* and recognizes the work of community based organizations whose works are unheralded.

This is the first time a "national" organization hosted an event in A City of Excellence in our 80 years as a municipal government. NCBON brings community organizations and their members into a national network to enhance capacities to 1) partner with universities/agencies within their neighborhoods and broader communities to promote health; and 2) to act collectively to influence decision making and policy at a national level. NCBON is part of the Community-Based Public Health Caucus of the American Public Health Association.



Fifteen organizations were recognized during the evening's affair which was held at the Seat Pleasant Recreation Center and one of the events sponsors. The Seat Pleasant/ University of Maryland Health Partnership (SP-UMHP) was one of the organizations recognized. Since 1999, the SP-UMHP provides health-related services and education to Seat Pleasant residents and those in surrounding communities, while enhancing learning, service and research opportunities for residents, students and faculty. The other organization to receive an award from A City of Excellence is Patriots Technology Training Center. Patriots Technology has been providing services to young people since 1997. Their mission is to bridge the "digital divide" which has limited access of minority students to the technology-driven economy that now prevails in the world.

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)

---

**(MAYOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED)**

I congratulate both of these Seat Pleasant based organizations for their long standing commitment in providing quality services to the people of our community.

As you can read, there is a lot of good that comes from Seat Pleasant. We are indeed a wonderful community and the future is bright for the best is yet to come. I encourage all of our citizens and residents to continue to take pride in which we are as a community. God has and continues to be good to us. While we are not a utopian community we are nonetheless a beautiful community comprised of beautiful people. If we continue on that stride we will cause the whole world to recognize that we **ARE A City of Excellence!**

---

## **OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK**

The City of Seat Pleasant has passed the following legislation in the month of November.

### **RESOLUTION R-12-03**

Resolution to support and encourage the enactment of the Prince George's County Council CB-061-2011 that would establish Prostitution Free Zones in Prince George's County and provide for enforcement within such zones.

### **RESOLUTION R-12-04**

Resolution to support the State Highway Administration MD/704 Martin Luther King Jr., Highway Safety Enhancement Project

### **ORDINANCE O-12-09**

Ordinance for the purpose of reenacting without amendments, and amending comprehensive regulations relating to parking, stopping and standing and use of vehicles on public and private property in the City of Seat Pleasant as enacted on October 10, 2011, by Emergency Ordinance No. 12-08, providing that the provisions of this Ordinance are severable; and generally relating to the comprehensive regulation of parking, stopping and standing and use of vehicles in the City of Seat Pleasant.

Copies of this legislation are available from the Office of the City Clerk at:

City Hall  
6301 Addison Road  
Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743-2125



---

## **COUNCILWOMAN SIMMS RECEIVES AWARD FROM NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES:**



Elenora Simms, Councilmember Ward I was recognized by the National League of Cities (NLC) for reaching the Silver level in its Certificate of Achievement in Leadership program. Sponsored by the NLC Leadership Training Institute (LTI), the award will be presented in Phoenix, AZ in November 2011.

To achieve the Silver level, a local official must earn 36 credits encompassing all five core competency area of the LTI curriculum, referred to as "Cornerstone," "Competent Practitioner," "Communicator," "Collaborator" and "Catalyst."

Simms is one of the fewer than 386 NLC members to have reached the Silver level in the Certificate of Achievement in Leadership program since its inception.

---

## **THE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT APPEAL PROCESS**

**By Robert L. Ashton City Treasurer**

### **THE ASSESSMENT APPEAL PROCESS**

Property owners sometimes feel that the department's estimate of their property value is wrong. The assessment appeal process is available to allow property owners the opportunity to dispute the value determined by the department.

**(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)**

---

**(APPEAL PROCESS CONTINUED)**

Property values rise and fall to reflect the market. A property owner should file an appeal when they believe that their property is not valued at its current market value.

Appeals may be filed on three occasions: upon receipt of an assessment notice; by a petition for review; and upon purchase of property between January 1 and June 30.

**APPEAL ON REASSESSMENT**

Property owners will normally receive a Notice of Assessment every three years in the last week of December that shows the old market value as well as the new market value. The new value reflects the market influence and other conditions affecting the property from the time of the last assessment. If you decide to appeal, the first step is to reply to the Notice of Assessment by signing and returning the appeal form within 45 days of the date of the notice. Following this, a personal or telephone hearing will be scheduled. Appeals can also be made in writing, eliminating the need for a hearing.

**PETITION FOR REVIEW**

You may file a petition for review by January 1 in the two years your property is not valued when events have occurred since your last regular assessment that you believe have caused your property value to decline. If you fail to respond to the Notice of Assessment within the required time frame, you may file a petition for review by January 1 for the following year. The completed form should be mailed to your **local assessment office**. After filing the petition, you will be scheduled for a hearing, or, if you prefer, your written submission can be reviewed eliminating the need for a hearing.

**APPEAL UPON PURCHASE**

If you purchase a property and the property is transferred after January 1 but before July 1, you may file an appeal within 60 days of the transfer. After filing a written appeal, you will be scheduled for a hearing; or, if you prefer, your written appeal can be reviewed instead of having a hearing.

**FIRST STEP - SUPERVISOR'S LEVEL**

The first level of the appeal process, known as the Supervisor's level, is informal. You will present your case to an assessor designated by the Supervisor of Assessments. Typically, hearings at this level take approximately 15 minutes.

You can obtain a copy of the worksheet for the property free of charge from your local assessment office. The information on the worksheet will be reviewed at the time of the hearing to assure its accuracy.

For assistance in estimating the value of your property, you can obtain sales data from various sources, including: sales listings located in the local assessment office; commercially available sales reports and other information available at local libraries; local real estate offices; personal surveys of recently sold comparable properties in the area; and local listings of sales transactions in the newspaper. For a nominal fee, worksheets of comparable properties may be obtained from the assessment office. To be most effective, you should:

- Focus on those points that affect the value of your property.
- Indicate why the Total New Market Value does not reflect the market value of the property.
- Identify any mathematical errors on the worksheet or inaccurate information describing the characteristics of the property (such as the number of bathrooms, fireplaces, etc.).
- Provide examples of sales of comparable properties which support your findings as to the value of the property.
- Avoid the following issues since they are not relevant to the value under appeal: comparison to past values, percent of increase, additional metropolitan costs, the amount of the tax bill, properties in other taxing jurisdictions, and services rendered or not rendered.

**Your first level hearing should be viewed as an opportunity to present evidence which would indicate that the department's value of the property is inaccurate.**

**SECOND STEP - PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEAL BOARD**

Following the hearing, you will receive a final notice. If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal to the next step which is to the **Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board**. The second step appeal must be filed within 30 days from the date of the final notice from the Supervisor of Assessments.

**THIRD STEP - MARYLAND TAX COURT**

**(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)**

---

**(APPEALS PROCESS CONTINUED)**

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by the Appeal Board, you can file an appeal within 30 days of the date of the board's decision to the Maryland Tax Court. The Maryland Tax Court is an independent body appointed by the Governor. Although the proceedings are more formal than the first 2 levels, it is still considered to be an informal, administrative hearing. Property owners who are in disagreement with the Tax Court's decision can appeal further through the regular judiciary system. Here you will probably need legal counsel.

**RECAP**

The assessment appeal process is a mechanism intended to assure an accurate property valuation. If you believe that the value placed upon your property is higher than it should be and if you can provide supporting evidence (such as sales information for properties comparable to your own), then it is in your best interest to appeal.

---

**A WORD FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT****Police Department Implements K-9 Program**

The Seat Pleasant Police Department is a 16 man agency with two civilian support positions and is located on the border of the District of Columbia with four main thoroughfares running through the heart of the City. This is important as it relates to the "War on Drugs". These main thoroughfares are a haven for drug dealers and various criminal elements that participate in the trafficking of illegal drugs through the City of Seat Pleasant from the District of Columbia. The City is also located within 5 miles of Interstate 195 which is also known to be used for a serious amount of Drug Trafficking from the Northern and Southern portions of the United States. It is safe to say that the City of Seat Pleasant Police Department is on the "Front Line" of the war on Drugs.

It is the initiative of the agency to take this war on drugs seriously and deter this severe criminal element with the installation of a working dog program. It is proven that a working dog certified in the detection of illegal narcotics is not only a deterrent but a necessary crime fighting utility. The City of Seat Pleasant has initiated a Canine Program to assist patrol officers of Seat Pleasant, and the surrounding 27 municipalities.

Tracking and drug detection is a prime function of police dog work. Tracking suspects from crime break ins, stolen cars, robberies, tracking lost children or adults is a function that under the majority of conditions, that human cannot duplicate. Under the majority of circumstances, the police work dog can be utilized more effectively than 10 or more officers.

By implementing this program and striving to incorporate new technology, the Seat Pleasant Police Department can be on the same playing field as the Prince George's County Police Department and other surrounding jurisdictions. This will benefit the citizens, City and agency as we endeavor to serve with pride.

---

**A WORD FROM CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Since winter will be approaching soon the Code Enforcement Department would like the residents to be mindful of the winter clean up process and ordinance. Due to the unexpected weather that we've had in the last couple of months please remember the following:

Seat Pleasant City Code 137-33-34: "Snow Removal - It shall be the duty of the owner and occupant, jointly, of every parcel of real estate adjoining a public sidewalk to keep such sidewalk adjoining such property free from snow and ice and full paved width of such sidewalk. Snow and ice shall be removed within 24 hours after the end of snowfall. Sidewalks in front of commercial establishments and commercial parking lots shall be kept free of snow and ice at all times between the hours of 9:00a.m. and 5:00 p.m."



**(CODE ENFORCEMENT CONTINUED)**

The Code Enforcement Department wouldn't be able to do what it does if it wasn't for the residents. With that being said, please keep a look out for squatters living in vacant properties. Because the weather is changing and it's cold, homeless people are looking for a place to get warm. So, if you notice people going into vacant houses please call the Police non-emergency number at 301-352-1200. The Police department will also pass this information on to the Code Enforcement Department and we will try to contact the owners to properly board the property up.

To all of the renters in Seat Pleasant, rental permit applications have gone out to the property owners. If you are renting a home in Seat Pleasant please contact the code enforcement office so that we can make a note of it. It's required that all rental properties within the city receive rental permits annually and the cost is \$100.00.

The holidays are approaching and the code enforcement department wants all residents to be informed regarding parking of vehicles during the holidays. Seat Pleasant City Code 154-2(C)(D): "It shall be unlawful for an owning, possessing or having control over any area or property to store, park, leave or cause or permit the storage, parking or leaving on such area or property of:

(c) More vehicles, regardless of their condition, registration or inspection status, than there are parking spaces allowed for under applicable zoning laws.

(d) Any vehicle anywhere on the property except the garage, carport, driveway, driveway apron, or other paved or improved surface located in the front or side yard of the area or property; provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall be interpreted as allowing or authorizing the blocking or impeding of any entrance, exit, sidewalk, right-of-way, lane or driveway or elimination of green space in excess of the permitted by applicable zoning laws and regulations. "

---

**A WORD FROM CPAC - MAGNET SAFETY**

Small magnets, found in toys like building sets, games, puzzles and even dolls, can kill children if two or more are swallowed. Although magnets have been in toys for many years, manufacturers have recently started using "rare earth" magnets, which are approximately 10 times stronger than traditional magnets. Therefore, they are able to exert a powerful attraction, even through human tissue.

If two or more magnets are swallowed separately, they can attract each other through intestinal walls. This can trap the magnet in place, causing problems to the body including perforations and other serious problems and often requires the repair of the child's damaged stomach and intestines. There are things you can do to keep your child safe.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has provided the following tips to help us prevent serious injuries from swallowed magnets:

- Do not allow children younger than 6 years old to play with toys that contain small magnets.
- Avoid magnetic toys that function as jewelry such as earrings, tongue piercings, etc.
- Make sure to look out for loose magnetic pieces. Remember that magnets can stick to places such as chair legs or the bottom of the refrigerator where babies have easy access.
- Inspect your children's toys regularly.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you think your child has swallowed a magnet.
- Watch for suspect systems like nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, and/or pain, especially if you think magnets may be involved.

Seat Pleasant's Citizens for Public Safety Advisory Council (CPAC) wants to keep our residents safe! If you have any public safety questions for us or issues you want us to look into, please contact us at [cpac.seatpleasant@live.com](mailto:cpac.seatpleasant@live.com).



## **SEAT PLEASANT VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY PARTNERS WITH THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CREATE LOCAL FIRE/EMS EXPLORERS PROGRAM**

The Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company (SPVFC) and the Boy Scouts of America will partner together to create a local Fire/EMS Explorer Program. SPVFC leaders and Jennifer Gayle, Director of Learning for Life - a division of the Boy Scouts of America - met to discuss the creation of the program in Seat Pleasant. "I personally love exploring programs, especially since my love for public safety came from being in a county [police] explorer program," said Marcus Jones, President of the Seat Pleasant Volunteer Fire Company.

Nationally, over 22,500 explorers participate in 1,754 fire and emergency services programs. Explorer programs provide hands-on experiences to develop leadership skills, career opportunities and community service activities. Once the program gets underway, students between the ages of 14 - 20 will be introduced to how the fire department operates. Students will have the opportunity to receive training on basic firefighting operations and emergency medical services. Explorers will also play a vital role in the community outreach aspect of the fire service as the frontline force working at community events.

The explorer program will be led by SPVFC members: President Marcus Jones, Vice President Keviette Potts, Public Information Officer Phil Martin, Lead Recruiter Nicole Bennett and Treasurer/EMS Committee Chair Bryce Mendez. Advisors will be assigned a group of students who will rotate through different courses and areas of expertise. The expected launch date for the Explorers Program is December 2011. For more information on the program or to share your interest, please contact Public Information Officer Phil Martin at 301-836-1957 or Lead Recruiter Nicole Bennett at 240-706-7708 or visit [www.exploring.learningforlife.org](http://www.exploring.learningforlife.org).



### **A WORD FROM THE SEAT PLEASANT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND HEALTH PARTNERSHIP AND THE PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER (UMD-PRC)**

#### **12 Holiday Tips for Health and Safety**

We want to share with City residents 12 health tips for the season, most of which were identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In fact, you can listen to their "12 Holiday Tips for Health and Safety" song (to the tune of 12 Days of Christmas) at <http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday>. The first holiday health tip is to wash your hands often. We all know this is one of the healthiest behaviors we can practice to prevent the spread of germs and disease; using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds is best. Second, stay warm and dress in layers; keeping warm is especially important for older adults and infants. Third, manage your stress. The holidays are an exciting time and we often see family and friends we have not seen all year, but they can also be very stressful times. Try to avoid doing too much and over committing yourself. This year, because of the economy, we all have to pay attention to cost—avoid overspending as this definitely increases stress levels! Focus on the spirit of the season and create "home-made" gifts.

The fourth health tip of the season is to travel safely. Many of us visit lots of folks over the holiday and whether we are travelling a long way or a few blocks, we need to wear our seat belts, drive defensively, don't drink and drive, and avoid drowsy driving. Because many celebrate the holidays with a drink (or two) and often do not get enough sleep during this time of year, our risk of being in an automobile accident increases. We also need to make sure the kids are all buckled in—using their child safety seat, a booster seat or seat belt, depending on their height, weight and age. The fifth tip of the season is to be smoke free. We also need to avoid second hand smoke. If you are still smoking, give yourself a holiday gift (as well as those around you) and quit! If you need help, call 1-800-QUIT NOW or contact your doctor.

The sixth health and safety tip of the season is to get physical health check-ups and examinations. Screenings allow us to find a problem early, when our chances of preventing more serious health issues are greatest. If we wait until we are in the final stages of whatever disease it may be, the treatment usually takes longer, costs more and may not be as successful. So get tested! The seventh holiday health tip is to watch the kids—they are at greater risk of injuring themselves and often do not know they are in an unsafe situation until after they jumped! Also, make sure their toys are safe and pay attention to what they eat and where they are playing.

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)

---

**(HOLIDAY TIPS CONTINUED)**

The eighth healthy holiday tip is to prevent injuries. To prevent falls, use step stools or ladders when hanging decorations rather than near-by furniture. The risk of household fires also goes up during the winter months; do not leave candles unattended or near trees or other decorations, and make certain your home has working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. The ninth tip is to safely handle and prepare food. Food-borne illness can easily be prevented by following a few rules: keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from cooked, ready to eat foods and eating surfaces. It is also important to cook foods to their proper temperature and refrigerate food after eating.

The tenth tip is to eat healthy! At times it seems as if weight magically appears when we step onto the scale during the holidays—there were simply too many delicious treats we had to sample! But we can limit the number we eat, or cut the piece in half or thirds, and offer fruits as a naturally sweet option to candy. The eleventh holiday health tip is to be active! Exercising on a regular basis may be the best lifetime present we can ever give ourselves. Treat yourself this holiday season, there are many fun ways to stay active—dance to holiday music with someone you love or take a long walk on a cold winter's night. The twelfth holiday health and safety tip is to be good to yourself and others. The Health Partnership and Prevention Research Center wish all Seat Pleasant residents, and their families and friends, a wonderful, happy, loving and blessed holiday season!

Sharon M. Desmond, Ph.D.

Seat Pleasant University of Maryland Health Partnership Co-chairperson

---

### **A WORD FROM PUBLIC WORKS**



Leaf season is here. November 16, 2011 - January 1, 2012 this year we need your help. In previous years we were picking up leaves from the curb with the leaf machine, this year that will be phased out altogether. The leaf machine will now only be used for common areas.

The Public Works Department is requesting that residents please bag leaves so that they may be picked up. When leaves are put out on the curb they blow back into your neighbor's yard and possibly your own. We are asking that you please be respectful of your neighbor's yard and bag your leaves. Leaves will be picked up by

Bates Trucking Company on Wednesdays. Please place bags by the curb the night before for pick up. Thank you all for your cooperation.

---

### **SEAT PLEASANT HOLDS ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY CELEBRATION**



The Mayor and Council would like to thank all those who took time out of their schedules to participate in this year's Veterans Day program held at the Seat Pleasant Activity Center. The event was well attended and by the comments of those in attendance, enjoyed by those present. Judge William D Missouri was the guest speaker for the event and Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Senator Joanne C. Benson, Delegate Michael Vaughn and Cynthia Mason-Posey, Director of Outreach and Advocacy, from the Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs were in attendance for

the festivities. The Color Guard and members of the Flying Star Ensemble from Central High School also participated in the event. The Veterans Day is an annual event in the City of Seat Pleasant to honor those who have served or are serving our country.



City of Seat Pleasant

*"A City of Excellence"*

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SOUTHERN MARYLAND  
PERMIT #235



**The Training Source, Inc.**  
*"We Are in the Community...for the Community!"*

#### Upcoming Events

- ⬆ Career Training – do you need training and assistance to get a career job in this tough economy? Call us to get started in a new career! We are recruiting for our January class.
- ⬆ Professional Clothing Closet – do you need professional clothing to interview for or begin a new job? Call us for an appointment and we can provide you with free, new or gently used professional clothing.
- ⬆ SAIL Community Partner – do you need to apply for TCA, food stamps, energy assistance or other social services? Our partnership with Prince George's County Department of Social Services allows you to apply at our site and shorten your wait time at local government offices. Call us for more information.

*"We Develop People, Not Just Skills!"*

59 Yost Place ~ Seat Pleasant, MD 20743 ~ 301.499.8872 ~ [www.thetrainingsource.org](http://www.thetrainingsource.org)

#### CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY



**DECEMBER 12, 2011**

**6:30 P.M.**

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SESSION**

**COME OUT AND JOIN US AS WE  
SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS  
AND ENJOY LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

**R.S.V.P. BY DECEMBER 5 BY CALLING  
301-336-2600**